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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 001086

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM/A - RUSCH AND NORONHA, NEA/ARN AND NEA/NGA

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SUBJECT: INS-APPROVED IRAQI REFUGEES AWAITING SAO CLEARANCE
FACE INCREASING PRESSURES AND DIFFICULTIES IN JORDAN

Classified By: DCM Greg Berry, per 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) AS REQUESTED BY PRM/A, THIS IS A BRIEF UPDATE ABOUT THE INCREASING PRESSURES AND DIFFICULTIES REPORTED IN THREE INS APPROVED REFUGEE CASES (13 PERSONS), PENDING THEIR SAO CLEARANCE. WE NOTE THAT, WHILE THE APPLICANTS THEMSELVES ARE THE PRIME SOURCE OF INFORMATION IN TWO CASES, UNHCR AMMAN HAS CONFIRMED THE SITUATION OF THE THIRD, AND EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF IRAQI REFUGEES MORE BROADLY AS REGIONAL TENSIONS RISE.

2. (C) ONE OF THE CASES, JO-000626, WAS APPROVED IN THE JULY 2001 INS MISSION AND WAS READY FOR TRAVEL IN SEPTEMBER 2001. NEW PROCEDURES IMPLEMENTED AFTER 9-11 REQUIRED US TO RESUBMIT HIS SAO REQUEST AND JO-000626 HAS BEEN PENDING EVER SINCE. DUE TO HIS LONG STAY IN JORDAN, JO-000626 CLAIMS THAT HE IS KNOWN TO THE IRAQI INTELLIGENCE SERVICES. AS A RESULT, HE HAS TO KEEP A VERY LOW PROFILE AND RARELY LEAVES HIS HOUSE BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IRAQI INTELLIGENCE SERVICES WILL "CATCH" HIM IF HE LEAVES HIS HOUSE.

3. (C) ANOTHER CASE, JO-000711, CURRENTLY WORKS WITH THE IRAQI OPPOSITION, THE IRAQI NATIONAL ACCORD MOVEMENT (INA, AL WIFAQ) HERE IN JORDAN. THESE INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK FOR THE INA REPORTEDLY ARE REQUIRED TO SLEEP IN THEIR OFFICES BECAUSE THE INA BELIEVES IT IS NOT SAFE FOR THEM TO GO HOME DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF IRAQI INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN JORDAN. THEIR CHILDREN DO NOT GO TO SCHOOLS AND THEY HAVE LOCKED THEMSELVES IN THEIR HOMES AND CLOSED ALL THE DOORS AND SHUTTERS. ALL REFUGEES WORKING WITH THE IRAQI OPPOSITION (E.G. IRAQI NATIONAL ACCORD MOVEMENT) CLAIM THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD BY OFFICIALS WITH THE OPPOSITION TO TRAVEL TO THEIR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE REFUGEES REPORT THAT THERE ARE OTHER EVENTS OCCURRING BUT THE REFUGEES CANNOT DISCLOSE THE INFORMATION OVER THE PHONE AND IT IS UNSAFE FOR THEM TO APPROACH AMEMBASSY AMMAN.

4. (C) ACCORDING TO UNHCR AMMAN, THE THIRD CASE, JO-000712, HAS BEEN "TARGETED" BY IRAQI INTELLIGENCE AGENTS. THE ENTIRE FAMILY HAS GONE INTO HIDING AND IS MOVED FROM ONE SAFE HOUSE TO ANOTHER ON A MONTHLY BASIS. ONLY THE PROTECTION OFFICER AT UNHCR KNOWS THE FAMILY'S EXACT WHEREABOUTS. THE SEVEN FAMILY MEMBERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE HOUSE. THEY ARE TRYING TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE, WHICH IS PROVING TO BE QUITE DIFFICULT.

5. (C) UNHCR AMMAN REPORTS THAT THE PRESENCE OF IRAQI INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS IN JORDAN PRESENTS A PERMANENT RISK FOR IRAQI REFUGEES WHO LIVE IN CONSTANT FEAR OF BEING HARASSED OR HAVING THEIR LIVES THREATENED IN JORDAN. IN GENERAL, IRAQI INTELLIGENCE CONTINUES TO SURVEIL AND HARASS SOME IRAQI REFUGEES HERE IN JORDAN. THEIR ACTIVITIES AND MOTIONS ARE CONSTANTLY MONITORED. REFUGEES REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN ATTACKED ON THE STREETS AND HAVE HAD PEOPLE COME TO THEIR HOUSES SEARCHING FOR THEM. WHEN THE REFUGEES LEAVE THEIR HOUSES, THEY ARE ALWAYS LOOKING OVER THEIR SHOULDERS.

6. (C) IN ADDITION, ACCORDING TO UNHCR'S MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE GOJ, REFUGEES HAVE THE LEGAL RIGHT TO REMAIN IN JORDAN ONLY SIX MONTHS AFTER THEY ARE RECOGNIZED AS REFUGEES BY UNHCR. AFTERWARDS, THEY RISK BEING SUBJECTED TO DEPORTATION TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (IN THIS CASE IRAQ). ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY CASES OF DEPORTATION OF UNHCR-RECOGNIZED REFUGEES, UNHCR IS INCREASINGLY ANXIOUS THAT THE GOJ WILL MOVE TO DEPORT RECOGNIZED REFUGEES WHO HAVE OVERSTAYED THEIR LEGAL RESIDENCY, PARTICULARLY IF CONDITIONS INSIDE JORDAN DETERIORATE.

7. (C) FINALLY, INCREASING TENSIONS IN THE REGION ARE MAKING THESE 13 INS-APPROVED REFUGEES INCREASINGLY NERVOUS ABOUT THEIR FATE. IF WAR WERE TO OCCUR AND THE CURRENT REGIME IN IRAQ WERE TO CHANGE, THE REFUGEES WONDER WHETHER THEY WOULD BE RESETTLED OR GIVEN THE CHANCE TO RETURN HOME. WOULD THEY LOSE REFUGEE STATUS ONCE THE CAUSE FOR FEAR OF PERSECUTION IN THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IS NO LONGER THERE? WE WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON THESE QUESTIONS, AS WELL AS TIMELY REVIEW OF SAO CLEARANCES FOR THE CASES DESCRIBED ABOVE.
GNEHM